

NEWHOUSE NEWS

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WASHINGTON - LEGISLATION TO REVERSE SOME OF THE POST-WATERGATE RESTRICTIONS ON THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY - ACTION SENATE LIBERALS HAVE BLOCKED FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS - IS GOING TO HAVE A BETTER CHANCE TO PASS IF IT REAPPEARS BEFORE THE MORE CONSERVATIVE 97TH CONGRESS NEXT YEAR.

TWO CONSERVATIVE SENATORS WHO HAVE BACKED LEGISLATION TO GIVE THE CIA AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES A FREER HAND IN THEIR OPERATIONS WILL BECOME CHAIRMEN OF THE TWO KEY COMMITTEES HANDLING INTELLIGENCE MATTERS.

SEN. BARRY GOLDWATER, R-Ariz., WILL REPLACE SEN. BIRCH BAYH, D-Ind., AS CHAIRMAN OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE AND SEN. STROM THURMOND, R-S.C., WILL REPLACE SEN. EDWARD KENNEDY, D-Mass., AS JUDICIARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN IN THE NEW REPUBLICAN-CONTROLLED SENATE.

PROPOSALS TO REPEAL SOME OF THE RESTRICTIONS ON INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS ALREADY HAVE HAD SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT IN THE HOUSE.

SEN. JOHN E. CHAFEE, R-R.I., IS EXPECTED TO REINTRODUCE A BILL FORBIDDING OFFICIALS OR FORMER OFFICIALS WITH ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS FROM REVEALING THE NAMES OF SECRET AGENTS.

SENATE LIBERALS, SEVERAL OF WHOM WERE DEFEATED IN LAST WEEK'S ELECTION, BLOCKED THE CHAFEE PROPOSAL THIS YEAR - ARGUING THAT IT AND SIMILAR MEASURES WOULD UNLEASH THE CIA TO CONDUCT ANY TYPE OF COVERT OPERATION.

THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL PORTION OF THE CHAFEE BILL IS A PROVISION THAT WOULD EXTEND CRIMINAL PENALTIES TO PRIVATE CITIZENS FOR REVEALING THE IDENTITY OF A COVERT AGENT EVEN IF THEY SIMPLY DEDUCED THAT IDENTITY FROM UNCLASSIFIED REPORTS.

ANOTHER PROPOSAL BACKED BY CONGRESSIONAL CONSERVATIVES WOULD EXEMPT ALL INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES FROM PROVISIONS OF THE FEDERAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT.

ONE BILL THAT DID GAIN PASSAGE IN THE 96TH CONGRESS ALREADY HAS REDUCED CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES. IT REDUCES THE NUMBER OF COMMITTEES WITH AUTHORITY OVER INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES FROM EIGHT TO ONLY TWO - THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE.

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